

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Hurray! The 2nd edition of Lex Littera is out and better packaged to keep you, our esteemed readers, whether lawyers or non-lawyers informed of the regnant happenings around our ever dynamic legal system combined with other essential aspects of the legal profession. This edition is a blend of legal analysis, reviews, fashion and lifestyles, experiences, and proposals for legal reforms.

Some of the captivating contents you will find not only informative but enjoyable includes: Was the Freedom of information Act violated by the Senate when it refused to disclose the monthly salaries of Senators? Is it not high time we reviewed the offence of attempted suicide? Are lawyers really liars? How should a 21st century lawyer dress to be well addressed and how standardized are law firms in Nigeria.

Also in this edition is the recent posting of some of the Judges of the Federal High Court. Indeed, every topic in this edition is a must read! Happy reading!!!

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THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND THE WRONG IN TERMINATING LIFE

Timothy Olo Sangbawe, Esq.

It is trite that the right to life is protected by Nigeria's Supreme Law, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), S 34 of the.

Constitution clearly states that "Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria." This undoubtedly is good law, which is enshrined in the constitution of most democratic states across the globe. But this exactly is not my concern.

My concern is with the inverse inference that can be deduced from this protected right. Invariably, the right to life does not include the right to take one's own life. That again is fine. But then, should attempted suicide be criminalized? Section 327 of the Criminal Code for instance punishes

attempted suicide with one year imprisonment.

Recently, a woman attempted suicide on Lagos' Third Mainland Bridge. Thankfully, unlike a young doctor that successfully killed himself in the same manner, she did not succeed. The question is: should such a woman who requires psychological, emotional, and perhaps spiritual support be subjected to the harrowing experience of a jail term? How can our congested, dehumanizing prisons ever rehabilitate such a person?

This is the point where the police should use their wide discretion to refrain from prosecution but ensure the victim enjoys restorative justice. Perhaps, if the Government has not consistently failed in its primary purpose of providing security and welfare for its citizens, she would not have succumbed to such cowardly act in the first place.



If I was given the power to make one change to the Nigerian Legal System, I would undoubtedly keep my sight on preserving the outstanding legacies of the esteemed legal personalities that have traversed the profession, and stem the systemic decimation of the noble profession.

There seems to be no better way to achieve this lofty objective than to ensure that the foundation is kept strong, stable and steady. It is principally against this backdrop that the need to standardize the operation of law firms in Nigeria becomes very germane. For without a system that ensures viability of law firms in Nigeria, the profession, and the country as a whole are certain to be run aground sooner or later.

The Nigerian Legal System as presently constituted is plagued with many mushrooms offices that hold out as law firms. It is so bad that they are derisively called shops by members of the public. If however the quality of what is chummed out in terms of legal practice is anything to write home about, perhaps one might not be so disturbed. Sadly, a vast majority of these offices are perfect examples of everything wrong about a law firm. Since these offices are not effectively run to generate significant profit, many new wigs have had to settle for demeaning pay packets.

It is so bad that some are offered figures that are far below the minimum income of civil servants. In other words, some persons at the lowest cadre of civil service such as cleaners and office assistants earn better pay than legal practitioners. The rippling effect of this on the legal system is better imagined. To be sure, never have law reports been replete with myriad of cases of

unethical and in some cases illegal practices by legal practitioners than we currently witness.

In a quest to survive the harsh economic realities of the time, and in some cases, in a bid to measure up to the high societal standing upon which legal practitioners are wont to be placed, many have aligned with the Machiavellian precept of the end justifying the means. Those who cannot stoop low to wearing the tag of charge and bail lawyers or hustle as land speculators stop short of swindling their clients or manipulating and abusing court processes in the most unprofessional way. In stealing, the needy are fast outnumbering the greedy.

Against this backdrop, I propose the "Standardization of the Operation of Law Firms in Nigeria Bill." As the title suggests, it shall stipulate standard rules to regulate the operations of law firms in Nigeria. The key reference points of its drafters would include setting out the physical infrastructure, departments, training and retraining modules, minimum wage for legal officers and sundry issues that must be in place before a law firm can legally sail on the waters of the Nigerian Legal System.

Firms who cannot keep up with this dawn of a new era should be encouraged to merge into partnerships. Invariably, this will ensure that freshly minted lawyers can focus on gaining experience and contributing to national development instead of constantly worrying about surviving till the next pay check. Needless to say this would have enormous, positive impact on the legal profession and safeguard its glorious future.



NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL GETS NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL AS PROF. O.A ONADEKO (SAN) SET TO RETIRE

Just recently Prof Isa Hiyatu Chiroma, a Professor of Law at the University of Maiduguri, and the Deputy Director General of the Yola Campus of Nigerian Law School has been confirmed as the new Director General of the Nigerian Law School to take over from Prof Oiarewaju Adewale Onadeko (SAN) who was the former Deputy Director General of Lagos campus and the former Secretary to the Council of Legal Education and Director of Administration of the Nigerian Law School before becoming the Director General of Nigerian Law School, and who is now due for retirement.

His successor, Prof Isa Hayatu Chiroma is an eminent public-law scholar with expertise in Islamic Law, Human Rights and structural constitutional law. He has taught and supervised Masters and Ph.D.

Candidates co-authored Handbook on Prison Pre-Trial Detainee Law Clinic and is a contributor of "Islam, Islamic Law and Human Rights in the Nigerian context", in Islam and Human Rights; and "Making Justice available to the poor through Development Cooperation: A Case Study of University of Maiduguri Law Clinic" Published in Administration of Justice in Africa Effectiveness, Acceptance and Assistance. He is also a legal consultant.

His appointment as Director General is not surprising following the incredibly successful performance of the Yola Campus in the 2015/2016 Bar II Examinations.

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Photo Splash



a. We are Passionate..

This Picture represent the passion and diligence that runs through Compos Men's Chambers.

b. Celebrating our dear Victor.

CMC Lagos celebrates our beloved Victor Chikezie, Esq.

c. TEAM CMC

The Compos Men's Team at the 1st edition of the Warri-centric 5km race organized by Compos Men's Chambers and Perfectus Laundry. The next edition will be holding in 2018, plan to be a part of it. The first edition was held at the NNPC housing estate, Epe.

d. Group Pix

It is our custom to celebrate our own.

e. "Pix just after Compos Men's Chambers Strategic review meeting.

From the far Left, Our Chief Consultant, **Engr. Nnoli Akpede-ye, Emmanuel Akpeme, Esq** the Learned Silk **Dafe Akpede-ye** (managing director), **Emokini-ovo Dafe-Akpede-ye**, and **Kester Oyibo, Esq.**

g. Warri-centric

The Learned Silk Congratula-Emokini-ovo Dafe Akpede-ye.

h. Warri-centric 1

Get set.... GOOOOO!!!

CRITIQUE ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE ON LEGAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA RAISED BY THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION.

- TEJUMOLUWA O. TAIWO ESQ. (LLB, SJ)

The legal profession is one of the most prominent and prestigious professions in Nigeria and the world at large. The profession boasts of men of high intellectual prowess and high standing who have risen through ranks and attained the loftiest heights in all aspects of governance in the society ranging from government, economic circles, corporate world, etc. Examples of these men are Abraham Lincoln, Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Obafemi Awolowo etc.

Legal education, both in its academic and vocational senses, is material to the quality of our justice system and impacts on the country's political, economic and social development. For example, the quality of judicial decisions and the reasoning behind same depend on the quality of the argument

advanced to the Court by the lawyer and upon the ability of the judge who is also a product of the legal profession to appreciate same.

The system of legal education in Nigeria is really underdeveloped if compared to other developed societies like the United States, England etc. On this backdrop, and amid concerns over falling standards of legal education and practice, a 23-man committee headed by Anthony Idigbe SAN under the current leadership of the Nigerian Bar Association ably led by Abubakar Mahmoud SAN was constituted to review and make recommendations on the state of legal profession in Nigeria.

The committee developed some terms of reference to keep its mandate in proper perspective and focus.

This article however focuses on the 7th term of reference which is the desirability of candidates seeking admission to the law faculties in Nigeria to possess a degree in another discipline as a condition for admission which is obtainable in some jurisdictions like the United States. Indeed, there are tremendous benefits attached to this proposal which will invariably help in the development of law as a profession.

Some of the advantages are that it ensures that a lawyer that is daily involved in the complexities associated with the legal profession can boast of having a mature mind.

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21ST CENTURY LAWYER? DRESS LIKE IT!



Nkechi K. Udeze

Time and time again, I am faced with the question, 'Is there really money in the legal profession?' My reply, "Of course" always induces the next phrase, "then why do many lawyers look haggard and shabby?!" This line of thinking by non-lawyers does not come as a surprise as you find a good number of lawyers looking like the world is about to come down on them.

Tattered open-mouthed shoes, oversized smelly blazers, once-white rumpled shirts, trousers with obvious stitches, and the list goes on. Whether in the court room or outside, a lawyer should dress impeccably. And no, I am not suggesting that a lawyer should be always suited up, but that under no circumstances should s/he be associated with a scruffy appearance.

Like it or not, most people are in the habit of 'sizing up' others based on appearance. If I were a non-lawyer, I would never be convinced if a lawyer told me he could handle my matter when I am not impressed with his appearance. In fact, I'd rather you look like a million dollar and have nothing in your head! Yea, appearances are that crucial to me. It invokes respect and a relaxed atmosphere. Essentially, a good fashion sense plays a critical role in making clients say 'yes' to your services.

Keep in mind that your appearance says a lot about who you are; so, ensure that your everyday outfit passes across the right message. Here are a few tips that could be of help if you are really desirous of dressing like a lawyer and using fashion to support your practice and your personal brand:

• 1. Your activities for each day should be a guide

Are you going to be running around from meeting to meeting? Or are you just going to be in the office doing some paperwork? Carefully select an outfit that aligns with the type of day ahead. For instance, there are series of meetings lined up for you outside the office but you do not have a personal car for mobility. Your usual means of commuting would be hopping from one bus to another. In this case, you certainly have no business wearing a colour like white, especially where the season is dry, the weather scorching, and you sweat a lot. Ever noticed that clog of brownish dirt around the collar area? It is especially worse for females who have make-up on. You do not want to be in a meeting looking like a pig from the trash and smelling like same. In summary, it is not advisable to wear a blazer under such intense weather conditions until you get to your destination.

• 2. Be confident and comfortable in that outfit but it should be fitting!

The importance of being confident in your choice of clothing cannot be overemphasized. You simply cannot perform your best when you lack confidence. Mind you, people have a

natural ability to tell when someone is not confident. Your fashion choices can give you a major confidence boost. However, do not mistake confidence for comfort! Some people are confident in what they have on, say because it is super pricey, whereas it does not make them comfortable. Ensure you combine both confidence and comfort in your fashion brand. On the flip side, it is normal to admire someone else's outfit and easily conclude it will fit you. Here's my two pence! Before you conclude you'll look amazing in it, actually picture yourself in that exact outfit. Does it flatter your body shape, structure or complexion? If you cannot tell by mere imagination, simply contact your designer or someone who is knowledgeable in that area for advice. Please, never wear an outfit, no matter how confident you are in it, if it is not fitting! You will only make yourself a cynosure of all eyes, in a bad way of course!

• 3. Dress like a lawyer on a budget

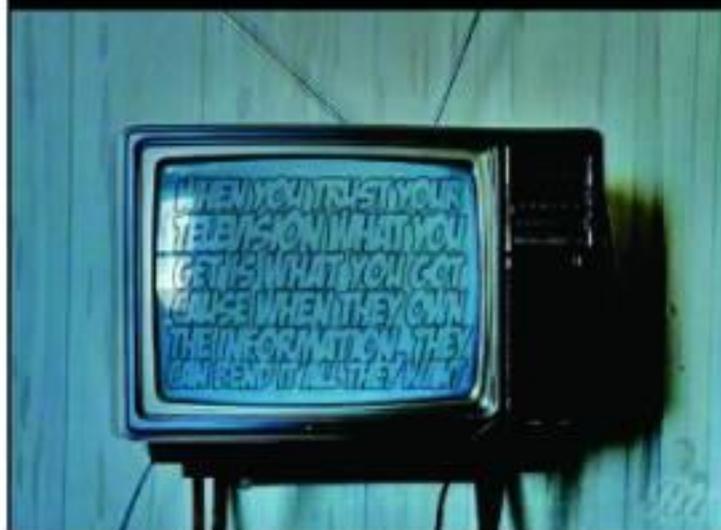
You do not have to break a bank to dress right. There are very affordable yet great quality brands all over. Just ensure that you wear good stuff. Your shoes, shirts, blazers and ties should be spot on. These items are about the first to be noticed; you cannot afford to create a wrong impression on those. And no, this is not about being vain, it is about dressing the part; dressing to attract the caliber of people you hope to meet. When you dress the part, even a potential client will not see your professional charges as ridiculous.

• 4. Smell nice

Have a lasting fragrance. Don't keep interchanging. Pick a fragrance and stick to it. Don't hide under the guise of hike in prices. See it as an investment on yourself. Or aren't you good enough to smell good? Having a foul smell is a no-no for a professional, especially a lawyer because by the nature of our profession, we meet people too often. Even if you don't value yourself, value the inhalers of such foul smell. Please, be nice and smell nice. Furthermore, having a mouth odour is worse than inhaling the stench of a dead rat. Please, get a breath freshener; it is too common these days. It is normal for your breath to be altered after a long day especially one where you did not have the luxury of talking often. However, before that meeting, use a liquid mouth wash (a must-have in every law office) or simply spray a breath freshener.

In closing, to build a great network and that desirable client-base, never be too comfortable in just any outfit. While you shouldn't make yourself suffer in an impractical outfit, you also shouldn't damage your professional reputation for the sake of being comfortable. Try to find a compromise between comfort and professionalism.

Your wardrobe coach,
Nkechi K. Udeze



You and Your
Television

Your Television can make you rich or poor. If you watch it all the time, it will make you poor. Psychologists have shown that the more television you watch, the lower your levels of energy and self-esteem. At an unconscious level, you don't like or respect yourself as much if you sit there hour after hour watching television. People who watch too much television also gain weight and become physically unfit from sitting around too much.



Your television can also make you rich- but only if you turn it off. When you turn off your television, you free up time that you can use to invest in becoming a better, smarter, and more competent person. When you leave your television off when you are with your family, you will find yourself talking, sharing, communicating, and laughing more often. When you leave your television off for extended periods of time, you break the habit of watching television- and you will hardly miss it at all. Your television can be excellent servant, but it is a terrible master. The choice is yours. Culled from Bryan Tracy's "No Excuses"



A lawyer named Mr. Strange was shopping for a tombstone. After he had made his selection, the stonecutter asked him what inscription he would like on it.

"Here lies an honest man and a lawyer," responded the lawyer.

"Sorry, but I can't do that," replied the stonecutter. "In this state, it's against the law to bury two people in the same grave."

Mr. Strange was not amused by the stonecutter's attempt at humor and asked if he had another suggestion.

The stonecutter said, "I could write, 'Here lies an honest lawyer'."

The lawyer protested, "But that won't tell people who it was."

"It most certainly will," retorted the stonecutter. "People will read, 'Here lies an honest lawyer' and exclaim, 'That's Strange!'"

The statement "Lawyers are liars" is used against anyone who indicates his/her interest in the legal profession or someone who eventually becomes a lawyer. The layman's understanding of the personality of a lawyer is that of a person who lies in order to win his/her case. There is even a popular but erroneous belief that lawyers are buried with their face down when they die, as a result of the 'heap of lies' they must have told when they were alive and practicing. Thus, describing a person as an honest lawyer is considered an oxymoron.

The perspective of the layman above is itself a lie. This is because, all a lawyer does is to apply the law to the case of his/her client by convincing the court to see the case from his own perspective. If the court agrees with the lawyer, then he gets to win his case. It is this process that the layman is ignorant of, hence he tags lawyers as liars. He cannot imagine how a man whom everyone knows has committed murder is allowed to go free. He doesn't understand that the ingredients of the offence, if not proven beyond reasonable doubt by the prosecution will be resolved in favour of the accused person notwithstanding the 'glaringness' of the 'truth'. He doesn't understand that the laws applied by lawyers to their cases were not made by the lawyers or the judiciary, and that all the lawyer does is to exploit the laws made by the legislature in favour of his or her client. He doesn't understand that advocacy is a combination of logic and wits.

Amidst the negative tag with which the layman brands the legal profession, he has an unfathomable liking for the noble profession. This is seen in the fact that he prays that one of his children studies law because of the reverence accorded to the profession. The aberration is now as to how he who says lawyers are liars and agrees that telling a lie is immoral, wants his child to be immoral by studying law; this is the puzzle even the layman does not have answers to.

Next time you are told lawyers are liars, try to put the maker of the statement on the right track by explaining what we really do and the variables that come to play in winning or losing a case. That way we can combat the negativity that has beclouded our noble profession for decades.