

Thought you ought to know

We've all heard the Miranda Warnings: You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. However, more practical in daily life, not just in criminal television shows or actually encountering the police, people fail to know that anything that they say (or fail to say) or do (or fail to do) is perfectly possible to be used against them not only in court, but around the water cooler, in the media or just in the head of the judgmental malcontent people around us.

People may have newspapers or gossip rags to sell. Some people may have nothing better to do, an inability to cope with themselves and therefore a fixation upon other people's drama (see reality tv shows). Some people may prefer to not even bother with checking their version of reality before proceeding to gossip or publish things to your detriment.

Lately, hubris seems plenty and personal responsibility seems scarce. Many people are seldom wrong, but never in doubt. So many conflicts escalate because people deem themselves righteous and authorized as the judge, jury and executioner of their world view or will upon others without consideration or respect for other's perspectives, rights, feelings, or property. If well intended in your inspired course of action, pull out the stops and proceed without doubt or delay, right? How often do we stop to check ourselves from creating our own troubles? How often are we readily or naively subjecting ourselves to conflict, directly by our own fault? I don't have to have a lawyer advise me before signing this contract, do I?

Social networking seems the most common, obvious and readily ignored area of self-destruction I hear or see in these days. Looking for a job (and think the interviewer hasn't seen your webpage)? Got cute pictures of your children on your wall with names, schools, city and other identifying information (and comfy some weirdo isn't looking at it)?

Keep in mind that these issues aren't limited to the internet: Admitting consuming any alcohol is an element of probable cause toward a DUI. Do you trust the use of folks' cameras or camera phones in the park, the store, etc.? Have you not seen enough politicians taken down by every little secret of their past? Ever wonder why a teenager's car with pot leaf stickers on the windows is searched by the police?

Do you think an angry, insecure, or simply thorough person on the other side of a lawsuit isn't aware of one's comings and goings posted upon open web pages, known around town or gossiped about? Do you think opposing counsel in trial will refrain from speculation and innuendo to weaken your case and bolster their case with items you put out there?

I've heard it said that a secret is something you tell someone else so they won't tell anyone. Do you still wonder how or why the word gets out?